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ESSAY ON SEPULCHRES.



Hilton del.

Hopwood sculp.

*Life is the Desert and the Solitude!*

*Published by William Miller, Albemarle Street, Feb. 1, 1809.*

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ESSAY  
ON  
SEPULCHRES:

OR,

A PROPOSAL FOR ERECTING SOME  
MEMORIAL OF THE ILLUSTRIOUS  
DEAD IN ALL AGES ON THE SPOT  
WHERE THEIR REMAINS HAVE  
BEEN INTERRED.

BY WILLIAM GODWIN:

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*Not one of these should perish.*

THE BIBLE.

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LONDON:

PRINTED FOR W. MILLER, ALBEMARLE  
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1809.



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## PREFACE.

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IN my conduct as the author of the following pages, I have endeavoured to conform myself to a well-known canon of criticism, To write with fervour, and to revise at leisure.

Whether they contain a plan capable of being reduced to practice, or are to be considered as a speculation and solemn reverie

merely, I desire not, and I scarcely feel myself competent, to pronounce. I divulge them purely by way of *tentamen* or experiment: “Darkly a project peers upon my mind:” they are rudely drawn, and want much of detail and minute reflection and explanation, before they can be considered as complete. I deliver what has passed through my mind, for the meditation of other men who may regard the subject treated of as worthy their attention. Yet I have endea-

## PREFACE.

voured to anticipate a multitude of objections that might offer themselves, and to fortify my suggestion against the ordinary weapons of controversy, as fully as I was able.

In the very heat and crisis of my enthusiasm, I never anticipated any thing better, than the adoption of this plan, or something like this, ten or twenty years hence, when I also should be deposited in the grave. I have none of the qualifications

that befit the institutor and leader of a public undertaking. I am a man of no fortune or consequence in my country ; I am the adherent of no party ; I have passed the greater part of my life in solitude and retirement ; there are numbers of men who overflow with gall and prejudice against me (God bless them !), and would strenuously resist a proposal I made, though it were such as from any other quarter they would accept with thankfulness.

One other remark is almost too obvious to be stated. Whatever is wholly new, is sure to be pronounced by the mass of mankind to be impracticable ; the discovery of gunpowder, the discovery of printing, the discovery of America, or any other novelty, of however great, or however minute a scale it may be.

On this point then I have nothing further to say, than—Whether the present proposal, or any thing like the present, be

practicable, I presume not to decide : but I do affirm, that, if capable of being reduced to practice, it is a scheme fraught with great and certain benefit to the human race.

It will be asked, by all those who love to cavil, and by some of the sincere, If your proposal is impracticable, why then is it published ?

To this my answer is simple.

First, I do not know (at least with certain modifications and improvements which might afterward be introduced) that it is impracticable.

Secondly, taking it for granted that as a proposal it is wholly visionary, that does not appear to me a sufficient reason why, as a train of thinking on a certain subject, it should be suppressed. The views into which I have been led, as to the effects flowing from the mortality of

man to human affairs, and the feelings and sentiments it becomes us to cherish respecting the Illustrious Dead, I apprehend to be reasonable and true. Inestimable benefit will in my opinion flow, from the habit of seeing with the intellectual eye things not visible to the eye of sense, and our attaining the craft and mystery, by which we may, spiritually, each in his several sphere,

Compel the earth and ocean to give up  
Their dead alive.

For just so much time as any one shall spend in reading and meditating on the suggestions of these pages, provided it be done in a serious frame, the project is a reality, and is as if it were executed : and I hope most persons who shall be induced to examine these hints, will derive from them a solemnity and composure of spirit, which so far as it operates at all, will be favourable to elevation of mind, to generous action, and to virtue.

To conclude: I trust that none of my readers will be erroneous enough to consider the vivid recollection of things past, as hostile to that tone of spirit which should aspire to the boldest improvements in future. The genuine heroes of the times that have been, were the reformers, the instructors, and improvers of their contemporaries; and he is the sincerest admirer of these men, who most earnestly aspires to become “like unto them.”

*Jan. 21, 1809.*

A PROPOSAL FOR ERECTING SOME  
MEMORIAL OF THE ILLUSTRIOUS  
DEAD IN ALL AGES ON THE  
SPOT WHERE THEIR REMAINS  
HAVE BEEN INTERRED.

---

*THIS might be effected by an extensive private subscription.*

*A charter should then be obtained for the purpose of giving permanence to the institution; and the funds, if considerable, might be appropriated to other purposes analogous to the original object.*

*A very slight and cheap memorial, a white cross of wood, with a wooden*

*slab at the foot of it (where the body had been interred in the open air), would be sufficient, if means were taken to secure its being renewed as fast as the materials decayed.*

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Objections  
considered.

TWO trite and obvious objections may be urged against this proposal. I will state these objections, and assume them as topics naturally leading me to the principal arguments in its favour.

I.  
Worthless-  
ness of a  
dead body.

I know (first) that “ scarcely any thing can appear to be of less value, and nothing less admirable,

than a dead human body." When the intellectual spirit is gone, the carcass of a man appears to be altogether worthless; and accordingly certain philosophers have expressed themselves altogether indifferent, whether their bodies, after death, were suspended in the air, or committed to the ocean, hidden in the bowels of the earth, or exposed on its surface to be devoured by beasts of prey.

But this is to consider the subject too poorly and literally. It proceeds on the plan of regarding man

Answered,  
from considerations  
drawn from  
imagination and the  
moral sense.

as the mere creature of abstractions and mathematical or syllogistical deduction, not taking into account the operation of human imagination and human feelings.

To the dead man (as a dead man) it is indeed a matter of indifference what becomes of his body. But to the dead man, if we take into account his nature while living, as a creature "looking before and after," and capable of imaging out and dwelling upon the things that shall be, it may not be indifferent.

But let us put out of the question for the present the dead man himself, and think only of survivors.

I will illustrate this by an individual case. I have been long and intimately acquainted, suppose, with some great and excellent man, great in intellect as Homer, or excellent in the principles that guided his conduct as Aristides. I confess myself unable to tell how intellect operates. I am more inclined to the opinion of the immaterialists, than of the material-

A case  
stated.

ists. But my acquaintance with the thoughts and the virtues of my friend, has been made through my eyes and my ears. Though I should adopt the creed of bishop Berkeley, and believe that the body of my friend, the vehicle through which the knowledge of these thoughts and virtues was conveyed to me, was nothing, yet I can never separate my idea of his peculiarities and his actions, from my idea of his person. I cannot love my friend, without loving his person. It is in this way that every thing which practically has been

associated with my friend, acquires a value from that consideration; his ring, his watch, his books, and his habitation. The value of these as having been his, is not merely fictitious; they have an empire over my mind; they can make me happy or unhappy; they can torture, and they can tranquillise; they can purify my sentiments, and make me similar to the man I love; they possess the virtue which the Indian is said to attribute to the spoils of him he kills, and inspire me with the powers,

the feelings and the heart of their preceding master.

Death, the  
death of a  
friend,  
what.

The greatest of earthly calamities, and the most universal, is death. The calamity is perhaps greater to him that survives, than to him that dies. The effects of this calamity are beyond all the powers of calculation to reach. When a great and excellent man dies, the chief part of what he was (at least so far as this world is concerned) perishes. It is very little of him that survives, in his memory,

and his works. The use and application of his experience, the counsels he could give, the firmness and sagacity with which he could have executed what he might have thus counselled, are gone. He had accumulated, it may be, great stores of learning; by long exercise he had refined his taste; he had collated facts; he had drawn the most curious conclusions. You might converse with this man incessantly for a year, and might learn something from him every day. After that, let us consider how many parts of his skill never

came forward as topics of conversation, and what extensive portions of learning and observation existed in him, that were never poured out upon you. It is impossible to calculate how much of good perishes, when a great and excellent man dies. It is owing to this calamity of death, that the world for ever is, and in some degree for ever must be, in its infancy.

My friend, as long as he lived, was in a certain sense every thing to me. His society was my delight. To anticipate the seasons

when I should enjoy that society, was the balm of my life. His presence, his countenance, what a solid and substantial good I derived from them! His voice, the spirit that flew from his eye and penetrated into my soul, no tongue can express the comfort I derived from these. I could resort to him for counsel whenever I pleased. The consolation under affliction that I drew from his sympathy; the gaiety with which his sallies would occasionally inspire me, enabling me to bear up under the cross accidents and heart-breaking

disappointments of life, were benefits, the greatest that can fall to the lot of a human creature. He was to a considerable extent all that we believe of high, noble and admirable in our nature personified. My personal knowledge of him, was the sustainer of my faith, my antidote against misanthropy, the sunshine which gilded the otherwise gloomy and cheerless scenes of this sublunary state. It is much to lose such a man.

But this is not all. If this friend were my familiar acquaintance, if

he dwelt under the same roof with me, if (to put the strongest case) I were so fortunate that the person worthy of all this encomium were the wife of my bosom, there is something in the nature of which we partake, that gives a value to such a possession beyond its abstract and intrinsic merits. One of the silliest fancies that has been started by the rigid advocates of the equality of our nature, is, that we are wrong to pity a person of high rank under adversity, a king in exile, Louis XVI in the Temple, Marie Antoinette in the *Conciergerie*, more than the meanest pea-

sant under a similar misfortune. I do not condole with a man because he never had a thing, but because, having once possessed, he has now lost it. Human beings are the creatures of circumstances. The good thing I have long enjoyed, by habit has become necessary to me, and I cannot be resigned or patient under the privation of it. This remark applies more acutely to the loss of a human friend and associate, than to any other calamity.

Death, the death of a friend, is a terrible thing; and it is rendered

more terrible by all its accompaniments. Other good things, health, fortune, even character, if we lose, we ordinarily lose by degrees. But my friend who dies, I lose at once. But now, and he was all that I valued; and now, in a moment, to me, the living inhabitant of the earth, he is nothing.

His form was pleasant to me; his motions were full of mind; his person was a little world, through every region of which thought, and will, and health, and vigour, and spirits cheerfully circulated. This

Sentiments which belong to the remains of a friend.

form is all that is now left of him. But, oh, how changed ! I would give all that I possess, to purchase the art of preserving the wholesome character and rosy hue of this form, that it might be my companion still. But by the law of nature it is subject to changes the most incompatible with this. The dead body of a man, is reserved by the system of the universe to be the great example to us, of the degradation of our nature, and the humility of our origin. I therefore cast a heap of mould upon the person of my

friend, and take the cold earth for its keeper,

But my thoughts will not stop here. Where is my friend? As to the thinking principle which animated him, I can follow it, by the close deductions of reasoning, or by the suggestions of faith, through the vast regions of space, and see “the spirit return to God that gave it.” But this is reasoning and faith; and I am to a considerable degree the creature of sense. It is impossible therefore that I should not follow by sense

the last remains of my friend; and finding him no where above the surface of the earth, should not feel an attachment to the spot where his body has been deposited. *His* heart must be “made of impenetrable stuff,” who does not attribute a certain sacredness to the grave of one he loved, and feel peculiar emotions stirring in his soul as he approaches it.

All this consideration of *hic jacet*, it must be granted, is very little. But such is the system of the universe, that it is all that we

have for it. It is our only reality. The solidity of the rest, the works of my friend, the words, the actions, the conclusions of reasoning and the suggestions of faith, we feel to depend, as far as they are solid to us, upon the operations of our own mind. They stand, and are the sponsors, for my friend; but what the grave incloses is himself.

So much for the reasonableness, the unavoidableness, of our regard for the spot where the remains of

a great and excellent man have  
been deposited.

II.  
Second ob-  
jection.  
The useless-  
ness of mo-  
ney ex-  
pended on  
tombs.

The second objection that may  
be urged against the erecting me-  
morials over the graves of the dead,  
is in the same spirit as the first.

It proceeds upon a cold, calcu-  
lating, literal principle. "We had  
better," say these objectors, "feed  
the living, than expend what we  
have upon the posthumous, and  
already extinguished, vanity of the  
dead."

Distribu-  
tion of pro-

No one can more cheerfully con-

cur than I am willing to do, in property considered.  
the premises from which these objectors draw their conclusions. There is but a certain quantity of good, substance, property, in the world; labour is the source of property; and materials, the materials of which monuments, and houses, a king's crown, and a queen's birth-night attire, are composed, are valuable just in proportion to the labour bestowed upon them. The soundest morality would direct, impartially and in all cases, that the property existing in any society should be employed in

such a way, as should most conduce to the welfare of the members of that society. If this morality which I avow, is stricter and more severe than almost any which is generally admitted, the objection, so far as it is of any force, will apply more emphatically to mine, than to any of the systems thus admitted.

The two  
parts of our  
nature,  
body and  
mind.

But this consideration must not be expounded too literally. If it were, nothing would be valuable in the world, but food, lodging and clothes. Not halls only and palaces, but libraries also, would be

unnecessary.—We should always remember that in man there is a mind to be fed, as well as a body. It is of more importance that man should be a virtuous and an honourable creature, than that he should merely be. I do not at present plead with savages, or the advocates of a savage state. I take it for granted, that man has an understanding to be matured, an imagination, or which is nearly the same thing, a moral sense, to be developed, and even a taste to be refined. Libraries therefore are good things. It is fit that learn-

ing and science should be cultivated, and that the powers of genius should be countenanced and encouraged. Even painting, sculpture, and music, are arts that deserve to be cherished.

If this be true, then we are no longer to confine our thoughts to the mere feeding of the human race, but are bound also to consider and commend every thing which tends to unfold and improve the noblest powers of man. Those things, whatever they are, are deserving of expence, which contribute to

the use of man as a compound and heaven-born creature. Away then with the base and sordid insinuation of Pope in the case of Sheffield duke of Buckinghamshire, who, he says, “helped to bury, whom he helped to starve\* !” If

\* It is said, in the notes to the later editions of Pope, that the person intended here was, not the duke of Buckinghamshire who erected the monument to Dryden, but the earl of Halifax. I am myself not well read in the *Bufos*, the *Artemisias*, and the *Phrynes*, the kindnesses [his friendships were sacred] hastily formed, and as abruptly discarded, of our English Horace. To my point however this question is immaterial. The writer

Sheffield refused any reasonable kindness to the living Dryden, he was worthy of blame; but inas-much as he erected a tomb to his memory, if this were a useful action, he did well: and the deed is so much the more entitled to commendation, as it is refined, and remote from the grosser conceptions

who thought it of no moment *where* Dryden was buried. [“ By the contribution of several persons of quality,” says Warburton on the passage, a funeral was bestowed on him in Westminster Abbey], must have been as little anxious whether the place of his interment were remembered or forgotten.

of the majority of the species, who are too apt to consider man merely as an animal to be fed.

Where is Shakespear ? Where is Homer ? Can any sensible mind fail to be struck with the deepest regret, when he considers that they are vanished from the face of the earth, and that their place is too probably filled up by some sleepy and lethargic animal, “dressed in a brief authority,” pampering his appetites, vapouring his hour, and encumbering the soil which his predecessor adorned ? While

Advantages of honouring the dead.

we regret then in this case the inexorable law of our nature, let us seize on what we can. Let us mark the spot, whenever it can be ascertained, hallowed by the reception of all that was mortal of these glorious beings ; let us erect a shrine to their memory ; let us visit their tombs ; let us indulge all the reality we can now have, of a sort of conference with these men, by repairing to the scene which, as far as they are at all on earth, *they still inhabit !* We are in no danger, in the present temper of European mind, of falling

into idolatry toward them : but obdurate must be the mind of him, who will bring away no good feelings and no generous sentiments from such a visit.

Men are apt to grow, in the apostolical phrase, too “worldly :” the propensity of our nature, or rather the operation of our state, is to plunge us, the lower orders of the community, in the concerns of the day, and their masters, in the cares of wealth and gain. It is good for us, sometimes to be “in the mount.” Those things are to

be cherished, which tend to elevate us above our ordinary sphere, and to abstract us from our common and every-day concerns. The affectionate recollection and admiration of the dead will act gently upon our spirits, and fill us with a composed seriousness, favourable to the best and most honourable contemplations.

Present  
state of mo-  
numental  
honours.

Many accidents have insensibly led me into the train of thinking which gave birth to these papers. I think it may answer some purpose to recollect these accidents.

One of them was a visit to West-<sup>Westmin-  
ster Abbey.</sup>minster Abbey. In what is called the Open Part of the Abbey, are to be found the tombs of many of our great literary characters, mixed with those of others who had a very slight claim to such a distinction. In the Inclosed Part the spectator is much more struck with the capriciousness of the muse of monumental fame. Except the kings down to those of the house of Stuart, he looks in vain for the tombs of almost all the great men that have adorned our annals. Instead of Simon Montfort, and

Stephen Langton, and Wickliffe, and the Montacutes, and the Nevilles, and cardinal Wolsey, and Cranmer, and sir Philip Sidney, and lord chancellor Bacon, and multitudes of others that offer themselves to the memory, we find sir John Pickering, and sir James Puckeridge, and sir Bernard Brocas, who lost his head in the cause of Richard II, and colonel Popham, and Thomas Thynne, who is immortalised for having been shot in his coach, and Mrs. Nightingale. There is good reason for the absence of most, if not all, of

the worthies above mentioned. I am no friend to cenotaphs. Nor would I be overnice in censorship over the illustrious dead; whoever has been truly distinguished for talent or action, I should hold worthy of a place; the tomb of Cromwel would teach me many instructive lessons; nor should I object to the monumental record of judge Tresilian, or Titus Oates. It is fit that men, the scourges of their species, or who have memorably dishonoured the figure of man, should be marked with a brand as imperishable, as the pure

Liberal allowance as to who are entitled to monumental honours recommended.

immortality that attends on our genuine benefactors. Nor do I know that it is worth while, by act of parliament or otherwise, to exclude those persons, who owe their monuments to the mere accident of a surviving relative having a few hundred pounds, which he chose to appropriate in this way. All has its moral. Their tombs are infected with the perishable quality of their histories.

But without imputing any blame to the monumental department of Westminster Abbey in these points,

the thinking spectator will not fail to be struck with the mistake under which he laboured, if he repaired thither in the apprehension that he should be presented with the record of all that is most illustrious which this island has produced.

But the most important consideration leading to the plan here suggested, is the perishableness of monuments.

When I first read Horace's *Exegi monumentum ære perennius*,

what principally struck me was the assuming tone and arrogance of the man, who could bring himself to speak in this style of his own works. I thought of monumental brass, as I thought of the globe of earth on which it was placed. But I have since found that Horace's boast, though too great for modesty and decorum, was by no means so vast as I had at first conceived. Where is Horace's tomb now? or where the tomb of Mæcenat his patron?

Solomon says, "One generation

passeth away, and another generation cometh : but the earth abideth for ever.” The same that is here said of man, may hitherto, with the difference of a few years, at most of a few centuries, be said of the works of the hands of man.

We remarked some way back, that “the world was for ever in its infancy\*.” It is indeed so :

\* The world is much like a school ; and to make the parallel complete, little more is necessary than to put one year in the latter, for ten years in the former. The pupils, we will suppose, are placed on an average

we cut ourselves off from the inheritance of our ancestors ; we for seven years ; some for a shorter, and a few for a longer term : and the director and guide of the institution sees one set of learners succeed after another, who are no sooner tolerably accomplished, than they are dismissed from the scene : the studies that are entered on, and the instruction that is given, are perpetually beginning : and though much is acquired, and great and earnest efforts are made after improvement,—one decade, and one century of years, passes away and another comes, and every thing is nearly in the same posture ; while ever-young infatuation, inexperience, and temerity perpetually disturb the profoundest designs and maxims that can be framed for general advantage.

seem to conspire from time to time to cancel old scores, and begin the affairs of the human species afresh.

I had occasion a short time ago to examine the succession of a family. I cast about for the means by which this was to be done. The Parish-Registers of Births, Marriages, and Deaths occurred to me. These serve us with moderate fidelity as far back as king Henry the Eighth. We are then brought, as far as that point is concerned, to the cradle of the English nation.

Tomb-  
stones  
scarcely  
outlast  
thirty  
years.

But I was idle enough to imagine that monumental inscriptions might afford some information. Alas ! ordinary tombstones are removed much after the manner, that the farmer removes the stubble of this year's crop that he may make room for the seed of the next. Go into any country church-yard. Three-fourths of the tombstones, you will find dated within the last twenty or thirty years. Yet as many persons died in the years that preceded ; and the passion for tombstones is probably now not greater than it was formerly. An

insulated tomb that aspires to permanence, must be ponderous. The best chance that a monument can have, is to be inclosed within a church, or to be fixed against its wall : it may then last three or four centuries.

A few years ago I was in Ireland. Story of the Seven Churches in Ireland.  
 One of the memorable scenes which were visited by me on that occasion, was a spot interspersed with ruins, called the Seven Churches, in the county of Wicklow. It is a vale, inclosed on every side with rocks and hanging woods,

and seems entirely cut off from the rest of the world. At the further end (for it is accessible only in one point) is the smooth expanse of a lake, and by climbing along a narrow and irregular path which fringes the overhanging rock, you may arrive, at the hazard every moment of being precipitated into the water below, at St. Cavan's Bed, an excavation in the rock, with a couch, or seat, running the whole length of the cave, where the saint was accustomed to sleep, and which has the virtue, if resorted to by a pregnant woman on

the anniversary of the saint, of securing her a safe and easy delivery. The ruins at the nearer end of the valley, instead of seven, appear to have belonged to thirteen or fourteen independent buildings. As you enter the valley, they are on your left hand. When I was there, the unoccupied space on the right, was covered with a small camp. I conversed with the officers, and found that they had taken up most of the flat grave-stones with which the valley abounded, to make a pavement in the front of the principal tents. They complained that the

superstitious vulgar were offended with this proceeding of theirs as a sacrilege, and I own that my feelings were nearly in unison with those of the superstitious vulgar. I did not stay, nor had I sufficient practice in this species of decyphering, to make out the half-effaced inscriptions on these stones, which were doubtless of extraordinary antiquity.

of the Monastery of Thetford.

Last spring I passed one day in solitude in the town of Thetford in Norfolk. The object which principally attracted my attention was

the ruins of the monastery there, which, though extremely imperfect, are picturesque. This monastery was founded and maintained at the expence of the ancient earls of Norfolk, and was used by them as the cemetery of their race. As I wandered through the limits of the inclosure, I trod upon the remains of the Bigods, the Mowbrays, and the Howards, men who in their day had exhibited vast magnificence, and upheld the pride of chivalry, who in their passions had shaken states, and in their untamed fierceness had bid defi-

ance to the resentment of kings. Ponderous monuments, graced with sculptures, and diversified with copious sepulchral inscriptions, once marked the place where they lay; and marble, clamped with iron, and defended with balustrades, protected it from invasion. All now was speechless, and the grass grew as freely where their bones reposed, as over a peasant's grave. At the dissolution of the monasteries in the reign of Henry the Eighth, Thomas, third duke of Norfolk, petitioned the king, that the spot rendered sacred to his

thoughts by being the depository of all his buried ancestors, might not be laid open and defaced, but that if it was no longer consistent with the policy of England that it should be a receptacle for monks, he might be permitted to convert it into a school for the education of youth. Henry at first lent a favourable ear to his prayer, but upon farther advice he found that it would be a dangerous precedent, and that the abbey of Thetford must undergo the same fate with the rest of the monasteries.—This was signally a period, in which a

plot was laid to abolish the memory of the things that had been, and to begin the affairs of the human species afresh.

of Reading  
Abbey.

In the autumn of the same year accident led me to Reading in Berkshire, where I found that the same event had attended upon the remains of Henry the First, one of the sagest and most accomplished of the race of our kings, which had been deposited there; that I had a few months before contemplated in the abbey of Thetford.

The church of St. Paul's, as it Old cathedral of St. Paul's. was destroyed by fire in the year 1666, and is described by Dugdale, contained scarcely fewer monuments, or of less distinction, than Westminster Abbey. When it was re-edified, no thought occurred of marking the spot where the ashes of our ancestors reposed. The tombs seem to have been regarded as having answered the purposes of their erection, and were dismissed to oblivion.

This consideration leads my mind Monuments generally neglected. back to one other remark with re-

gard to Westminster Abbey : a remark of almost universal application wherever tombs are to be found. They are fallen into entire neglect ; no care is taken to maintain them in their original condition. When I paid a visit to the tomb of Alice Chaucer, duchess of Suffolk, at Ewelme in Oxfordshire, who died in the year 1475, I observed it repaired and beautified, newly gilded and painted in every part : I was told that two hundred pounds had been spent upon it the year before. A few such instances may be found,

where money has been bequeathed for the express purpose, or a fund has been set apart [for the poor at Ewelme], which may be diverted to this object at the discretion of the trustees. But in general it is signally otherwise. The tomb of our renowned conqueror, Edward the First, in Westminster Abbey, is merely a rude, vast pile of stone, with no inscription or record upon it, and which is only known by tradition to cover his ashes. The shrine of Edward the Confessor, erected at a vast expence by Henry the Third, is robbed and defaced

by every comer. How Henry the Fifth came by the loss of his head I do not pretend to explain. Every sort of indecorum has been practised in this venerable pile. The noses of a considerable part of the figures are broken off; and the last time I was there, I found a little pebble placed by some wanton boy on the tip of the nose of the recumbent figure of Catherine, wife of George Villiers first duke of Buckingham, which no one had thought it worth his while to remove.

In almost every ordinary church

yard we may see altar-monuments, with the upper surface and some of the sides broken to pieces, and the whole a heap of ruins, even before they are fifty years old.

This is a characteristic of the human species. A person of decent character “honours his father and his mother;” but all beyond he regards with the most frigid indifference. We are more inclined to the miserable mummary of a funeral, the pageantry of a day, than to preserve the memory of our progenitors. A human creature of

Remote ancestry  
thought of  
with indifference.

the most admirable endowments, whose dispositions were the subject of universal encomium, whose gracious demeanour won all hearts, who spoke, and the ears of every one were delighted, who acted, and happiness every where followed and benedictions resounded, as soon as a generation is gone by, and the eyes that witnessed these virtues and graces are closed, is thought of no more; but as a simple link in the ostentatious chain of a pedigree. We look on with the idle gaze of the Levite in the parable; and the marble that

covers them is no longer any thing but a common stone. The person who detects himself in this apathy, should at least remember that his turn is hastening on, and that he will shortly be spurned, maltreated, and thought on with unshrinking indifference, even as he spurns those that went before him.

Virtue is virtue still, though a thousand years should have passed away since it was alive ; and there is something in the noblest impulses of the heart, that should

enable them to flourish for ever in perpetual youth.

Inexpensiveness of the plan here suggested.

There is one obvious objection to the maintaining of monuments, in the expence it would occasion. I do not approve the laying out two hundred pounds on the tomb of Alice Chaucer; and if such a proceeding were general, it would be an abuse of enormous magnitude. It is one object of the present proposal to show how the end may be effected at a very cheap rate. I do not require sumptuousness of decoration; my plan calls

for no accumulation of materials, or exquisiteness of sculpture: the object is to mark the place where the great and the excellent of the earth repose, and to leave the rest to the mind of the spectator. It its vitality, does not seek perpetuity, as ancient Egypt, in the massiness and innoveableness of the pyramid; it aims at a better security, in keeping for ever alive the spirit that first put the project into action. *Opinionum commenta delet dies, Naturæ judicia confirmat*, says Cicero. If the plan is simple; if it appeals to the ever-living feelings of the

human heart ; if it be such, that though suggested late, we wonder that it was not among the first conceptions of civilised society ; then, once begun, it has a spirit of propagation in itself that forbids it to perish. But of this further hereafter.

Benefits  
that will re-  
sult from it.

I proceed to consider the benefits that may be expected to arise from the adoption of this proposal.

Distinction  
of *New* and  
*Old Coun-*  
*tries.*

There are two sorts of countries that divide the face of the globe, *New Countries* and *Old*. One of

the hemispheres of which it consists, is emphatically called the *New World*. A great part of the other hemisphere,—a considerable portion of Africa, a considerable portion of Asia, the most northerly portion of Europe,—consists of *New Countries*. I know not how long these may have been inhabited; but I know that the remoter generations of their inhabitants have passed away, without leaving a vestige behind.

Which of these two sorts of countries would a man of reflec-

tion, a man of taste, a man whose heart beats with moral perceptions and feelings, choose to visit? In *new countries* we may discern the wilder and more romantic features of nature; the precipice, the lake, the cataract, the hanging wood, and the vast ridges and clusters of mis-shapen and cloud-capt mountains. Glorious and admirable emotions grow out of the contemplation of these. We may stand upon the surface of a *new country*, and observe the heavens, and penetrate into all the recesses of astronomy. But how much greater

is it than this, to revert to the noblest of the creator's works, and to call up the nations and men who have formerly trod the earth which now I tread ! Perhaps every particle of mould which now exists, was once kneaded up into man, and thought and felt and spoke as I do now. This however is not the point. That which has perished and left not a trace behind, I may call barren soil, of no conscious utility to the men that be. But the clod (such it is now) that we know formerly to have been a part of the excellent of the earth,

is of the most admirable fertility. It bears, not perhaps flowers, and vegetable perfume, the corn of the granary, and the fruits of the orchard ; but it is fruitful of sentiments and virtues, of those thoughts which make man the brother of them “ that have none to help them,” and elevate him to a God.

Advantage  
of travel-  
ling in an  
old country.

How delightful must it be, to wander among the scenes of ancient Greece and Rome ! Is it possible for a man who has contemplated the history of these

states, not to be lifted out of himself, when he stands on the soil where Sophocles thought, and Demosthenes spoke, and Themistocles and Aristides contended for the palm of public virtue? I could not traverse the area which was once the Roman forum, and not feel myself surrounded with the spirits of Fabricius, and Regulus, and Gracchus, and Scipio, and Cicero, and Brutus. I would spend days in tracing out the villas of these Romans, and looking down from the Piræum, upon the gulph from which the Athenians

resorted to their wooden walls, and where they returned, when the storm of tyrannic invasion was over, to their beloved native land. All the particulars, of their devotion, their worship, their superstition, in some respects however weak, would be interesting to me.

I conceive it to be one of the advantages which the fortune of my birth reserved for me, that I was born the native of an *old country*.

Yet of these advantages man

kind by their conduct seem to make no account. They do not husband their inheritance. Like Aristippus of Cyrene, they find their treasures too cumbersome for them, and pour them forth upon the sands of the desert.

Let us contemplate for a moment the subject under consideration in its connection with history. Historical utility of antiquities and ruins. It is incredible in how idle and unimpassioned a temper we apply ourselves to the reading of history. Alexander the Great is to us the hero of a romance, and many a

romance is read with an intenser winding up of the human feelings. The conduct of Edward the First in the conferences at Norham, and the behaviour of the Black Prince after the battle of Poitiers, are now merely tales, drawn up for our amusement. Man is a creature, who depends for his feelings upon the operations of sense. The barely looking upon a bust, supposed to be the portrait of the real Alexander, gives a different tone to his annals. When I have visited the monuments of our English kings, I study their transactions in a

graver spirit than before. Portraits may be imaginary; the scenes where great events have occurred are the scenes of those events no longer: but the dust that is covered by his tomb, is simply and literally *the great man himself*.

Maps of England have been drawn, where the scenes of famous battles and other memorable transactions have been pointed out by a particular mark. I love to dwell in a country, where, on whichever side I turn, I find some object connected with a heart-moving tale,

or some scene where the deepest interests of a nation for ages to succeed, have been strenuously agitated, and emphatically decided. A tale of invention, or of idle tradition merely, is of great power in  
Guy's Cliff. this respect. When I saw the cliff where Guy earl of Warwick, having taken the vow of a hermit, was said, though within half a mile of his countess and his children, to have concealed himself till death, so that he was believed to be in the Holy Land; when the spot was pointed out to me where the bower and labyrinth of Rosamond

Rosa-  
mond's  
Bower.

Clifford were represented to have stood ; it was impossible but that my soul should be somewhat moved.

“ Old Conway’s foaming flood,” Conway  
Castle.  
with the lofty castle beyond, has acquired a sacredness from the supposed massacre of the Bards in that place. If these scenes were not really transacted, and the passions of the real persons excited there, at least a beautiful association has been produced, by the bare selection of the spot made by the author of the romance, for the imaginary exercise of such feelings. But it is otherwise with the tale of

The Tower. truth. I never entered the Tower of London, without meditating on the murders with which it has been stained. The first time I stood in the Gallery of the British House of Commons, Hambden, and Pym, and Bradshaw, and Cromwel were present before me ; and I saw Charles the First ascend the Speaker's Chair, and demand the instant surrender of the leaders of his adversaries. The various fields in which " York and Lancaster drew forth their battles," bring to my mind the generous feelings and inextinguishable at-

House of  
Commons.

Battle  
scenes.

tachments which kept alive that contention, and the deplorable examples of cold-blooded murder with which it was attended. The scenes of the grand contest for our liberties under the Long Parliament, the fields where Falkland expired, and Hambden bled, hold a language of another sort.

I never understood the annals Kenilworth Castle. of chivalry so well, as when I walked among the ruins of Kenilworth Castle. I no longer trusted to the tale of the historian, the cold and uncertain record of words

formed upon paper, I beheld the queen, “ of lion-port,

Girt with many a baron bold,  
And gorgeous dames,

uprear her starry front.” The subtle, the audacious and murder-dealing Leicester stood before me. I heard the trampling of horses, and the clangour of trumpets. The aspiring and lofty minded men of former times were seen by me as I passed along, and stood in review before me.—One fine evening in the beginning of autumn, I incidentally read Spenser’s beautiful Hymn to

Valle Crucis Abbey.

Love under the ruins of Valle Crucis Abbey in the county of Denbigh : a volume of this author happened to be in my pocket : and it is incredible how much sweetness the sentiment gained, by contrast with the sacred and austere chastity once professed there, with the monks who formerly dwelt within those walls, and still who slept beneath my feet \*. This it is to live in an *old country*.

\* Nothing can be more beautiful, than the idea in the Grecian Mythology, of the two kinds of fire, and the divinities that presided over each. Vulcan was the God of

Applica-  
tion.

What I plead for in the present proposal, is that by a simple and gross and material fire, the fire employed for vulgar and mechanical purposes ; he was the husband of the parent and prolific Venus. But Vesta, the emblem of chastity, was also the Goddess of fire. The fire of Vulcan was the fire of the forge and of thunder ; it was fitful and furious : but the fire of Vesta was the purer element, which burned evenly, and was never extinguished. By this emblem it is signified to us in the most expressive manner, that chastity, a heaven-born resolution, and the sublime pursuit of a determined purpose, is not, “as dull fools suppose,” a frigid and languid state of thought, but has in it a fervour and enthusiasm, a heat unallied to fumes and obscurity, more

perhaps infallible means, we should  
paralyse the hand of Oblivion.

admirable and divine than any other of which  
an intellectual being is susceptible.

Meantime, the moral of this fable is of  
still wider application. There is, and per-  
haps always has been, much cant afloat in  
the world, about *warm hearts*, and *cold  
hearts* : and no doubt there is a real division  
of human beings into what may be loosely  
called the *feeling* and the *unfeeling*. But the  
division is not exactly as it is vulgarly under-  
stood. The hottest fire is not that which on  
every slight incentive blazes on the surface,  
but that which is close pent up in the re-  
cesses of the heart, and much oftener causes  
the bosom to glow, than the eye to send .

Why should Milton, and Shakespear, and lord Bacon, and sir Philip Sidney die? Perhaps yet forth sparkles of fire. In a word, the sincerest warmth is not wild, but calm; and operates in greater activity in the breast of the stoic, than in that of the vulgar enthusiast. If the image of permanent and celestial fire can be justly applied to any thing human, it best accords with the fervour of genius; and Shakespear, who possessed that quality in the greatest abundance of any earthly creature, was noted by his contemporaries for a man of equable carriage, and the most admirable serenity of temper. I do not believe that any man ever painted the passions well, without understanding them, or understood them, without a susceptible heart.

they shall not wholly die. I am not contented to visit the house in Bread-Street where Milton was born, or that in Bunhill-Row where he died, I want to repair to the place where *he now dwells*. Some spirit shall escape from his ashes, and whisper to me things unfelt before. I am not satisfied to converse only with the generation of men that now happens to subsist; I wish to live in intercourse with the Illustrious Dead of All Ages. I demand the friendship of Zoroaster. Orpheus, and Linus, and Musæus shall be welcome to me.

I have a craving and an earnest heart, that can never be contented with any thing in this sort, while something more remains to be obtained. And I feel that thus much at least the human race owes to its benefactors, that they should never be passed by without an affectionate remembrance. I would say, with Ezekiel, the Hebrew, in his Vision, "Let these dry bones live!" Not let them live merely in cold generalities and idle homilies of morality ; but let them live, as my friends, my philosophers, my instructors, and my guides !

I would say with the moralist of old, "Let me act, as I would wish to have acted, if Socrates or Cato were the spectators of what I did!" And I am not satisfied only to call them up by a strong effort of the imagination, but I would have them, and men like them, "around my path, and around my bed," and not allow myself to hold a more frequent intercourse with the living, than with the good departed.

The world we dwell in is a curious object. It is an ever-shifting scene, and by some moralists has been

Odiousness  
 of living  
 only with  
 the men  
 that live—  
 sterility.

compared to a *camera obscura*, that affords us the prospect of a frequented road. I have myself lived long enough to have seen almost all those persons whom my childhood and my nonage revered, consigned to the grave: those whom I remember with go-carts and rattles now occupy the scene: and even they are fast passing over, to make room for their successors. Within the same limits were circumscribed the lives of Solon and Alfred. They existed on earth for a little while, and—"the eyes that had seen them, saw them no more."

The men that have lived, are they less important than the men of the present day ? Had their thoughts less of sinew and substance ; were their passions less earnest, their conceptions less vigorous, their speech less fervent, or their deeds less lofty and less real, than ours ? He must be a man of feeble conceit and a narrow soul, to whom they are like the shadows of a magic lantern. Shadows certainly they are, no more than we are shadows. To him who is of a mind rightly framed, the world is a thousand times more populous, than to the

man, to whom every thing that is not flesh and blood, is nothing. I pity the being of slender comprehension, who lives only with George the Third, and Alexander of Russia, and Wieland, and Schiller, and Kant, and Jeremy Bentham, and John Horne Tooke, when if the grosser film were removed from his eyes, he might live and sensibly mingle with Socrates, and Plato, and the Decii, and the Catos, with Chaucer, and Milton, and Thomas Aquinas, and Thomas à Becket, and all the stars that gild our mortal sphere. They are not dead.

They are still with us in their stories, in their words, in their writings, in the consequences that do not cease to flow fresh from what they did: they still have their place, where we may visit them, and where, if we dwell in a composed and a quiet spirit, we shall not fail to be conscious of their presence.

For the purposes here treated of Sepulchres of the men of former times to be discovered. it would be necessary that some pains should be taken to investigate the precise spot where the bones of men have been deposited. It fortunately happens that a spirit

of antiquarian research is one of the characteristics of the present age, and that therefore, if the proposal here made were adopted, the vanity of this spirit, where a better motive was wanting, would assist in the execution. I would never have the mind of man deceived in this point, where it was possible to avoid it. Feeling and scepticism in the same question “cannot live together.” When I meet the name of a great man inscribed in a cemetery, I would have my whole soul awakened to honour his memory, and chastised into sobriety by the

thought of what he was ; and while I call his ghost from the tomb to commune with me, and to satisfy the ardour of my love, I must not be intruded on by any idle question, that this is perhaps but his ideal grave. Yet to an imaginary person I do not refuse the semblance of a tomb. As has been already observed, poetical scenes affect us in somewhat the same manner as historical : I should be delighted to visit the spot where Cervantes imagined Don Quixote to be buried, or the fabulous tomb of Clarissa Harlowe. I would not

therefore refuse in the case of real personages, after all reasonable enquiries had been pursued, to take up with the traditional sepulchre of king Arthur.

Project to  
be begun  
in Great  
Britain.

In every thing there must be a beginning. All therefore that I am here suggesting, and all that could at first be attempted, is a scheme for Great Britain. Good deeds and good feelings are contagious. That might be expected to happen here, which Pope describes in the progress of moral sentiment in general: if but a

“pebble stirs the peaceful lake,”  
strait one circle begins to be formed, and then another, till the agitation at length reaches to the remotest parts, and the most distant extremity.

The scheme here suggested of a simple memorial of wood, will of course be perceived to be only suited to graves which are in the open air, and perhaps we must add in a rural position. It is easy however to modify this proposal to the variety of circumstances which may occur. I would not recom-

Modifications to which it must be subjected.

mend to demolish the ample and sumptuous monuments, particularly which belong to persons of genuine merit, that now exist. But, wherever new expence is to be incurred, I would plead for simplicity, a simplicity that should lead us by a strait road to the great man himself, without diverting our thoughts to the skill of the sculptor, or the vain-glory and ostentation of the great man's descendants. A horizontal stone on the level of the pavement, or a mural tablet, where the grave is inclosed within a building, is abundantly

enough. Meanwhile, I am impelled by my project to look forward to the time, when Westminster Abbey, and St. Paul's at London, and St. Peter's at Rome, shall be prostrated on the earth, and nothing but two yards of perpendicular soil shall be interposed, between the great man, and the skies to which his inherent temper unavoidably prompted him to aspire.

One or two further considerations are yet necessary, before I can consider my idea as adequately developed.

Objection  
from the  
instability  
of sublunary things.

It may be objected, that such a proposal is essentially nugatory, since all human things are subject to change. "If monumental brass is found ineffectual, if towers and palaces and temples vanish away, if of some of the greatest cities which man ever inhabited no vestige now remains, what virtue can there be in a white cross of wood and a wooden slab, that we should flatter ourselves that they will be of longer life? Incorporations and charters have their date, and there is not one now in existence that has lasted a thousand years."

To this I answer, first, that, if Preliminary answers.  
we adopt the proposal, *we* at least shall reap the benefit, and experience the moral uses, which are of no common magnitude, that attend upon such an institution.

Secondly, we shall feel the substantial consolation, that we have discharged our part, and performed our duty. The affairs of mankind are supposed to be subject to “a sort of periodical influx of barbarians; and new Goths and Vandals will hereafter arise, who will sweep all memorial of our improvements

from the face of the earth." Be it so : I know that we cannot "command success:" all that is left us is ; we may act so as to "deserve it."

But I have better hopes.

Substan-  
tially an-  
swered.

The plan here offered is exceedingly simple and unexpensive. I trust to the heart of man, and not to the hands of man, for its execution. If it is perfectly in accord with the universal feelings of our nature, it may be difficult to begin : once begun, and proceeded

on for a certain length of time, it may prove impossible to abrogate.

It has been already observed, Gradually increasing reverence for what is old. that though men love and honour their parents, they look with cold indifference on their remoter ancestors. But there is a gradation in this. Though we look with indifference on the men of an hundred years ago, it is not so when they are placed in a more distant perspective. "Antiquity," as Montaigne says, "is an object of a peculiar sort ; distance magnifies it." With what veneration do men now

look, upon what is conjectured to be the tomb of Virgil ? This would be the case in a still higher degree, if it related to the more distant benefactors and ornaments of the world. There is one difficulty respecting this, as the matter stands at present : it might be expensive to keep up the tomb of Virgil, or Cicero, or Demosthenes, or Homer ; and chance only, and that an extraordinary chance, would find the man who should say, *This expence belongs to me.* But the plan here suggested remedies this defect in two ways : it is attended with

very little expence ; and its direct view is to keep up and perpetuate a committee of men, who should feel, *This is our business.*

It is then one great advantage of the present scheme, that the longer it lasts, the more vigorous it is qualified to become. The great men who died a century ago may be only moderately precious to *us*; they will become (if they were of sterling greatness) more an object of enthusiastic admiration to our posterity. Ages to come will also be rapt in wonder at the simplicity

of the means by which they are still enabled to find where the excellent of the earth repose ; and it may not unreasonably be supposed that while pyramids, and aqueducts, roads of the most substantial structure, and vast cities, shall perish, these simple land-marks, which any child might overthrow, shall be regarded as sacred, and remain undisturbed witnesses of the most extraordinary revolutions.

Danger of  
monuments  
becoming  
too nume-  
rous con-  
sidered.

Nor is there any danger that these memorials should become so numerous, as to interfere with the

free use and fertility of the soil. Every parent or relative ought no doubt to be at liberty to mark as he pleases, and in what form he pleases, the earth which covers the ashes once so loved. But this would be a sort of altar, the duration of which would scarcely exceed the life of him who worshipped at it.

It is with the memories of men, as it is with books. Those will always be the most numerous, which are of the freshest date. But this is all accident. The books

and the memories of men of the eighteenth century, at present overrun our libraries, and clog up our faculties. But the time is hastening on, when this shall no longer be the case, when they shall be reduced to their true standard, and brought down to their genuine numbers. The tomb, the view of which awakens no sentiment, and that has no history annexed to it, must perish, and ought to perish. The description of the fate of mortal writings, so admirably given by Swift in his Dedication to Posterity, is not less applicable to the

present subject. We may turn away our heads, and the memorial perishes; we may revisit the cemetery after the lapse of a few months, and one stone or another, with its inscription, shall have disappeared, and been replaced by one of fresher gloss and more unseasoned pretensions. I foresee no present danger, that those dead “of whom the world was not worthy,” should crowd and elbow out the conveniences of the living: I am rather desirous that the catalogue of those who merit this species of remembrance, should be made on the most

liberal scale. Memorials of this kind can be nothing more than commentaries and illustrations of history ; and history is necessarily limited, by the limited faculties of the human mind to take in and store up facts, and masses of facts.

Subjects of  
monumen-  
tal honours,  
how to be  
selected.

I may be asked, “ Who is to draw up the table of the Illustrious Dead, and to mark the line of separation between the worthy and the unworthy ? How gross are the mistakes that have been committed on this subject ? What wretched pretenders have some-

times been honoured and idolised by their survivors? While on the other hand, the names of men who have been made little account of by their contemporaries, have not unfrequently been drawn by a more just-judging posterity, from the obscurity in which they were perishing."

The answer to this is easy. Let the rule of allowance, to the pretensions of the dead, and the partialities of the living, be a liberal rule. He must be a churl indeed, who would refuse two feet of earth

to even a doubtful fame. If then our scroll be ample, there will be room enough in it for the caprices and changes, which are incident to fame, scarcely less than to fortune. The maxim already delivered, is for the most part the cardinal maxim, "That tomb, the view of which can awaken some sentiment, and that has some history annexed to it, is worthy to be preserved."

The object of the suggested institution is twofold; to rescue from impending oblivion the graves of those, whose monuments, from

the time that has elapsed since their deaths, are either decayed, or utterly subverted; and to mark the places where men of humble merit, recently deceased, and whose closing days were the victims of poverty, repose. In all this there is scanty room for party and cabal. The poor man who sunk to his grave neglected, a Chatterton, a Boyse, or a Savage, will have no advocates but what are such from conviction\*; and concerning the

\* Chatterton and Boyse were I believe, both of them, interred at the expence of the parish, in the Burying Ground of the Work-

excellent of past ages, party and contention are nearly extinct. The house in Shoe-Lane. The man whose heart has ached over the narrative of the lives of these men, will feel a double pang, when he finds them alike failing of the prize to which they aspired, living and dead. Chatterton died too young to enable us to judge of his propensities ; and if the painful conviction is forced upon us in the case of the other two, that their dispositions were so disorderly as to make it difficult, almost impossible, to serve them, let it be remembered that they offend no man now, that their irregularities cannot now disturb any man's peace, let us weep over their follies, draw instruction from their examples, and meditate with sadness upon that species of

précept therefore I would wish to lay down upon the subject should be this : Do not fear to remember too much ; only be upon your guard not to forget any thing that is worthy to be remembered.

It may occur to some persons that the project here suggested, would be attended with considerable expence in point of superinten-

No expence for superintendence required.

genius and intellectual power (rare I hope in its occurrence) which can be associated with incorrigible weakness, and bear within it the taint of utter inutility to its possessor and his connections.

dence. “Almost every village,” it may be said, “contains the grave of some great man : the remains of departed merit are widely dispersed : might it not require an army, as numerous as that of excisemen, to watch over and preserve the “frail memorials” which were erected to their honour ?”

This, if true, would indeed be a fatal objection ; but I cannot see the subject in this light. A very small proportion of time would be consumed in this vigilance, if the memorial were wantonly re-

moved or destroyed, the recollection of where a great or a good man was buried would not perish in a year, and an annual visitation would be abundantly sufficient for the object proposed. It could not therefore be a question of great difficulty, to prevail on proper persons to perform this labour gratuitously. The subscribers, if the plan of a sufficient subscription were carried, would themselves be considerably scattered; and the incumbent, or even the curate, of a parish, is usually imbued with such a tincture of literature, and of the

knowledge of things past, as not to be averse to the undertaking for so moderate a portion of attendance as is here required.

Literary  
merit not  
generally  
felt.

I know not whether it is worth while to notice under this head the idea, “ that the vulgar mind does not easily apprehend how literary men are its benefactors : military and naval characters they best understand ; for the benefit or glory attendant on their achievements is most tangible.”

Answer.

To this I have nothing to op-

pose but the fact ; and I do not believe that human nature is so perversely constituted, as not in process of time to allow to facts their due weight. Military and naval achievements are of temporary operation : the victories of Cimon and Scipio are passed away ; these great heroes have dwindled into a name ; but whole Plato, and Xenophon, and Virgil have descended to us, undefaced, undismembered, and complete. I can dwell upon them for days and for weeks : I am acquainted with their peculiarities ; their inmost

thoughts are familiar to me ; they appear before me with all the attributes of individuality ; I can ruminate upon their lessons and sentiments at leisure, till my whole soul is lighted up with the spirit of these authors. “ The poorest peasant in the remotest corner of England, is probably a different man, from what he would have been but for the writings of Shakespear and Milton. Every man who is powerfully and deeply impressed by the perusal of their works, communicates a portion of the inspiration all around him. It passes

from man to man, till it influences the whole mass. I cannot tell that the wisest mandarin now living in China, is not indebted for part of his energy and sagacity to Shakespear and Milton, even though it should happen that he never heard of their names."

One observation more. If it should be thought that such a A Sepulchral Atlas proposed. scheme as is here suggested, would, from the mere fluctuation and uncertainty of human affairs, be too precarious in its operation, one further security might be employed. I spoke a while ago

of maps, in which the scenes of famous battles were distinguished with a peculiar mark. Why might not something of this kind be introduced in the subject before us? It might be called, the Atlas of those who Have Lived, for the Use of Men Hereafter to be Born. It might be plentifully marked with meridian lines and circles of latitude, “with centric and eccentric scribbled o’er,” so as to ascertain with incredible minuteness where the monuments of eminent men had been, and where their ashes continue to repose. If this were done, nothing more

would be necessary in times of the greatest calamity and devastation, than to preserve one copy of this precious depository of the records of past ages. Though cities were demolished, and empires overthrown, though the ploughshare were passed over the site of populous streets, and the soil they once occupied were "sown with salt," the materials would thus be preserved, by means of which, at the greatest distance of time, every thing that was most sacred might be restored, and the calamity which had swallowed up whole genera-

tions of men, might be obliterated as if it had never been.

and a Catalogue of Sepulchres.

I would further recommend that a Catalogue should be compiled, exhibiting in a brief compass the places of sepulture of the Illustrious Departed. If, as has been here asserted, the cemeteries of the dead form the best commentary on historical narration, such a catalogue would be of exemplary use. When I enter the chapel of Edward the Confessor, and behold Henry the Fifth on the West, Edward the Third and Richard the Second to the North, and Henry the Third, and

his son, king Edward the First, to the South, this is a sort of pledge to me of the verity of their histories. When I read the list of our kings who have been buried at Winchester, I have visited that city, though I never saw their tombs, and even this serves me as a new link of association. Just so, in the life of every man whose writings or deeds have ever interested me, I regard the place of his burial as one part of his biography, without which all other records and remains are left in a maimed and imperfect state. A Catalogue therefore, which should in a small number of pages present

us with the last and still remaining abode of all that English honour has yet had to boast, might be despicable to the literal man and the calculator ; but would be a precious relic to the man of sentiment, and prove to be a Traveller's Guide, of a very different measure of utility, from the " Catalogue of Gentlemen's Seats," which is now appended to the " Book of Post-Roads through Every Part of Great Britain."

THE END.







